

**TYPHUS FEVER  
IN  
CORNWALL**

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**C. CARLYON**

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**1827**

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**OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
ENDEMIC TYPHUS FEVER  
OF  
CORNWALL,  
AND  
ITS CONNECTION WITH WANT OF CLEANLINESS ABOUT  
THE HABITATIONS CHIEFLY  
OF THE  
Lower Classes of Society,  
WITH SOME  
REMARKS TENDING TO THE IMPROVEMENT  
OF THE  
DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF COTTAGERS.**

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BY  
**CLEMENT CARLYON, M. D.**

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1827.



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OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
ENDEMIC TYPHUS FEVER,  
OF THIS  
*COUNTY, &c. &c.*

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NOTHING has a greater tendency to debase the lower orders of the community than dirty habitations and slovenly habits. And at the present day, when cottages and small tenements are springing up, like mushrooms, in every direction, it is more than ever to be regretted that, in their construction and arrangement, so little attention is paid to the essential points of cleanliness and health; for, generally speaking, the dirty and unhealthy dwellings we meet with, might easily and at little expence, be converted into cleanly and comfortable ones, especially in country places, where there is seldom want of room for the requisite accommodation.

A traveller through the mining districts of Cornwall, will perceive that most of the cottages spread around him, have been built under great disadvantages of soil and situation, and that they make very different pretensions, according to the different abilities of the individuals by whom they have been built, from the lowest labourer to the comparatively rich and intelligent mine-captain. Finding that they are usually owned and occupied by the persons who have themselves reared them, or by their immediate descendants, he will be prepossessed in favour of so industrious a population, and may expect to meet with arrangements, within and without, corresponding with his first favourable impressions. But in this respect he will, on a closer survey, be disappointed, with only a few exceptions principally applicable to the dwellings of the agents and captains of mines, to which it may hardly be fair to advert in any terms but those of unqualified commendation. Their spruce gardens, surrounded with a low wall in front, and the green meadows adjoining, impart an air of cleanliness and neatness, which naturally lead to the persuasion that such must be the abodes of well regulated families. Yet even of these the courtlets will be too frequently found deficient in commodious and cleanly arrangement.

In parts of the County not connected with mines, we shall find the same, or a greater neglect of cleanliness. The wretched cob-built cottages, scattered over the country, have, almost invariably, open catch-pits close to them; and I scarcely know a single village or *church town*, where the same nuisance may not be seen before the very doors and windows of the houses.<sup>a</sup> Nor is the evil by any means

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<sup>a</sup> If Helford, in the parish of Manaecan, were the model of our Cornish villages, I should say that they were built with eob, and divided into apartments by slight wooden partitions; and that, in the chambers, the partitions were raised not so high as the roofs, but left all open above; whence there was a free circulation of air through every room. Yet, in some places, the dwellings of the poor are wretched hovels; or, if tolerable in point of room, are not so clean, as the general character of the Cornish would teach a traveller to expect. There is, indeed, very much wanting in the regulation of the sick poor, with respect to their own habitations. Most of their dwellings, (as in St. Keverne church town,) have their dung pits immediately before the doors; their beds are, in general, rotten and filthy, and they lie three or four together. In this state, disease must spread, and too often has pervaded a whole family at the same time. Benevolent neighbours are liberal of their wine, their brandy, and their beef: but attention to the far more essential points, has been neglected, either from fear, or ignorance. A few mattresses of clean straw, and old sheets, should be in readiness in every parish: and the

confined to the country—our towns are sadly negligent of measures conducive to the health of the inhabitants, and the lower classes, in particular, might almost always be better accommodated than they are, with mutual benefit to themselves and their landlords. How then can we be surprised at the perpetual recurrence of typhus fever?

The situation of *Truro*, with a river flowing on either side of it, is remarkably favourable to cleanliness, yet, notwithstanding its fair exterior, it contains, I am sorry to say, dirty, ill-ventilated allies, and backlets so offensive to health and decency, that they are scarcely to be approached without risk of febrile infection.

To the east of *Truro* we find *St. Austle* enjoying the peculiar and unenviable privilege

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*parish officers should be directed to have the stagnant pools of filth immediately removed.* This sort of inattention to cleanliness about the houses and in the bedding, is not confined to the lowest classes in this county. Many of the farmers, who can afford a better provision, are shamefully mean in the furniture of their upper apartments, not to say filthy; and to the paucity of inhabited houses they owe their exemption from frequent severe scourges by putrid fevers. (*Polwhele's History of Cornwall.*)

of chains of open catch-pits, which, from time immemorial, have been diffusing throughout the neighbourhood, their infectious exhalations and which, no doubt, have largely contributed towards its frequent visitations of typhus fever.<sup>b</sup>

The populous town of *Redruth* is situated about eight miles to the west of *Truro*, and, in proportion to its population, is the abundance of liquid stagnant filth which is suffered to accumulate in open pits, or rather reservoirs, even in the immediate neighbourhood of houses remarkable for their neatness of appearance, and inhabited by persons of respectability and opulence. Typhus fever is consequently never wholly absent, for any length of time together, from *Redruth*, and it is observed to fall equally upon the different classes of inhabitants, in so much that it has sometimes been matter of surprize that persons in easy circumstances should be attacked with fever when their poorer neighbours may happen to be exempt from it. But the polluted atmosphere is common to all; and, when the weather is favourable to infection, the lia-

<sup>b</sup> At the village of *Sticker* about two miles and a half from *St. Austle*, on the road to *Truro*, may be seen some perfect specimens of the kind of catch-pit, which is the bane of our cottagers generally.

bility to it will be somewhat in proportion to the greater or less delicacy of the health of individuals; a liability more in favour, under ordinary circumstances and when living near each other, of the poor than of the rich. It is only when want and misery combine with infection, as has too frequently occurred of late in Ireland and elsewhere, that the number of poor wretches who fall victims to the raging epidemic, is out of all proportion to that of persons in possession of the comforts of life.

If we pass to the north of *Truro*, we shall find typhus endemic in *St. Columb* and the adjoining parishes, and there can be no doubt of their deriving it from the same besetting sources of infection. A few years ago it fell upon the parish of *Lower St. Columb* with particular severity, and, in the family of one farmer, two if not three, including the farmer himself, fell victims. Their house was situated on high ground, but the farm-yard, which was surrounded by a stone wall for protection and shelter, seemed to contain every sort of nuisance that could accumulate in the centre of so small a population.

To the south of *Truro*, the towns of *Penzance* and *Falmouth*, swept as they are by the

refreshing breezes of their delightful harbour, have nevertheless each its independent and prolific sources of infection, and their present liability to fever will continue as long as these are suffered to remain.<sup>c</sup> And this brief survey might be extended much farther, if it were necessary, but as it would not be easy to know where to set the limit, if it depended on the absence of 'all just cause of complaint, I shall bring this part of my observations to a close after saying a few words of the capital of Devon. In the spring of 1825 I spent upwards of a week there, and, during that time, the inhabitants were annoyed by a most revolting, I had almost said pestiferous nuisance, occasioned by the removal of an immense accumulation of stable dung from the depository of the New London Inn. So immense had the accumulation been, that, notwithstanding there were many capacious farm-waggons employed in carrying it off, the stench continued for several successive days. It was neither like the odour exhaled from a common stable yard, nor that occasioned by the removal of ordinary heaps of

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<sup>c</sup> *Flushing* likewise during the hot and dry weather of the last summer was allowed to become very offensive from the dirty state of the gutter which traverses the centre of its principal or rather only street.

dung ; but the sour and putrid effluvia, diffused throughout the high - street, in the track of the waggons, seemed quite peculiar to the enormous mass from whence their loads where taken. A gentleman, who lived in the high - street, complained of the nuisance as a very grevious one, and said that it occurred about four times a year. Surely this will never be allowed much longer, when its recurrence might be so easily obviated by guarding against so large an accumulation of dung in one place ; to effect which nothing more is necessary than to remove the accumulations of a month, instead of those of three months, to some spot at a proper distance from the city. It is impossible to say in what proportion this nuisance, *sui generis*, may have contributed, with the usual causes, to render the atmosphere insalubrious, but I cannot doubt its doing much mischief. In the autumn of the year, especially after so long and hot a summer as the last, it must greatly tend to aggravate the epidemics incident to that season ; and I believe it is a fact that, in addition to occasional severe visitations of cholera, *Exeter* is obnoxious to typhus to an extent that scarcely admits of its being at any time entirely free from it.

After the above remarks, which are certainly not very flattering to the police of *Exeter*

and of towns nearer home, it may be natural to ask how it happens that, not only in these parts but generally throughout Great Britain, we hear so much less upon the whole of fatal epidemics now than formerly? In fact, throughout the British Empire, and particularly its chief cities, a great amendment certainly has taken place, within the last two centuries, in every thing that regards cleanliness and health. Within this period the medical treatment of disease has been reduced to clearer and more just principles; and when we likewise take into consideration the improvement in the general mode of living, we shall be at no loss to account for the total disappearance of the plague, the sweating sickness, and the severer forms of dysentery and ague; or for the comparative mitigation of many diseases that are still of frequent occurrence. Prior to that immense accession to our winter fare for which we are indebted to an improved system of agriculture, famine was almost an inevitable attendant upon every recurrence of unfruitful seasons. And whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the precise nature of contagion, yet there can be none with respect to a fact which is as clear as the sun at noon day, that famine and its attendant wretchedness exert a malignant influence upon the health of mankind; and where the evils of

a crowded and dirty city, such as *Constantinople* at present or *London* formerly, concur with famine, there disease in its most frightful form, call it plague, dysentery, or by any other name, will start up as an almost certain consequence. What then must be the inference at which we necessarily arrive, but that, whilst some dire diseases appear entirely to have left us in consequence of the great improvements which have undoubtedly taken place in many respects conducive to health, yet the good work has failed to proceed far enough; and that there still remain too many corners of the Augœan stable uncleansed. Our towns have still their narrow, ill-ventilated and dirty streets, and foul courtlets innumerable; whilst our country villages and detached cottages are negligent of cleanliness to the greatest degree, so that it is no wonder that fever should spread over the land, far and wide, under the now generally adapted name of *Typhus*, not, it is true, with the desolating fury of plague and famine, but too frequently with fatal severity. Some have supposed that Typhus is even more prevalent than formerly: but from the circumstance that fevers formerly called bilious, remittent and nervous, have latterly taken this one common denomination, we can sufficiently account for its being so familiar to our ears in the present day. It

may be further seen by the following interesting extract from Pryce's "Mineralogia Cornubiensis" that, in addition to those severer inflictions of Providence, which are known to have fallen occasionally on Cornwall, although less frequently, perhaps, than on many other parts of England, the same disease, under its different forms, which we now call typhus, was then, (1750,) as it has been ever since, endemic in this County. But there is abundant evidence to shew that the evil was no more confined then, than it is now to mining parishes, and, consequently, that its source could not have been such as Pryce supposes, however well the theory he advances may have fallen in with his own immediate field of observation, and with the philosophical speculations which, under the sanction and weight of Boyle's authority, were then in great favour.

After observing that, "In a treatise on the wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of air, Mr. Boyle makes it appear, that they depend principally on the impregnation received from subterraneous effluvia, a cause generally overlooked;" Mr. Pryce proceeds to say, "Hence it may, perhaps, be no difficult matter to shew, that an alteration of the common air, by an unctuous vapour of the vitriolic kind, raised by an unseasonable warmth, and too great a pro-

portion of watery and other grosser particles mixed with it, may be the cause of those epidemick diseases, which are generally called nervous and malignant, biliary and putrid."

"I was drawn into the particular consideration of these matters, by our endemick fevers in the spring of the year 1773, and my peculiar lot to fall in with those of the worst kinds: so prevalent were they indeed, that I may venture to affirm out of three thousand inhabitants here, not less than half the number were manifestly affected in a greater or less degree with febrile symptoms of the nervous, biliary, or malignant kind; and though not above fourteen persons died, yet we have many who may lament the effects of those disorders to the latest day of their lives. In the year 1752, nervous and malignant fevers were reckoned mortal in this parish, and particularly in families where a similarity of constitution equally favoured the production of one disorder. I then knew three brothers to have died of a putrid malignant fever, out of four which had the disease; yet these men all lived in separate houses, at a quarter of a mile's distance; and had the least intercourse with each other that ever I observed in persons so nearly allied: I take this to be a great instance of the efficacy of contagion in one derivative habit of body."

“ Some part of our Mining district is ever molested by such violent fevers: one or other of the parishes of St. Agnes, Kenwyn, Kea, Redruth, Gwennap, Stithyans, Wendron, Sithney, Breage, Crowan, Gwinear, Camborne, and Illugan, have epidemick fevers always among them.

“ Mineral exhalations are allowed to be one cause of contagion, and, Mr. Boyle says, even of the plague itself: my principal design, therefore, is to prove the obnoxious situation of our Mine country to those dangerous diseases; and from thence to infer, that they are with us the peculiar production of Mineral effluvia. If this is not the case, I should like to be informed what occasions those disorders to rage with such violence among us, and be endemical to our Mining parishes? Perhaps it may be said, they are produced by the unwholesome and uncleanly manner of living among the Tinners. But I have known them to originate in the most cleanly healthy families; nay, it is notorious, that the more regular livers, and more delicate inhabitants of this town, have more generally and powerfully experienced their attacks.

“ In December 1772, particularly at the time of the poll for a knight of the shire, we had

warm moist atmosphere for three weeks, without rain, or a currency of air sufficient to blow out a lighted candle. Soon after, nervous and malignant fevers were very rife, and were generated I apprehend by those Mineral effluvia, which, in that month, by means of the foregoing constitution of the atmosphere, were suspended for a considerable time, and particularly affected those persons whose nervous system was very weak and lax, or those of quick or lively sensations; while such as were athletick, robust, and sanguine, generally escaped their pestilential influence. Again; it was observable, that the weather, in December 1774, and in the beginning of January following, was unseasonably warm, serene, and mild; the air for three weeks before was scarcely agitated by one breeze, but continued, all that time, warm, moist, and vapid. The writer then predicted the consequential malignant effects which happened soon after; and he thinks any one may foretel the eventual incidents that must follow such continual unseasonable weather, in a country teeming with Metals and Minerals.<sup>a</sup>"

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<sup>a</sup> The above extract from the folio, and I believe only, edition of Pryce's "Mineralogia Cornubiensis" (a work which entitles its Author to rank among the philosophers and learned men of his County,) may likewise

The parishes enumerated by Mr. Pryce, in the preceding extract, as peculiarly liable to fevers in his time, are equally so now, and there can be no doubt that the sources of infection were the same then, as they are at present. There is no sort of necessity for calling spirits from the mineral abyss to account for them. We have only to substitute open catch-pits, for the words metals and minerals, in the last sentence of the above extract, and the inference will cease to be incorrect. Within the circuit of the parishes therein enumerated, besides towns and villages much in want of sanatory regulations, there are extensive and barren downs, and wet and dreary moors, over which are scattered groups of comfortless cob-houses and numberless single cottages, wretchedly built, and damp and dirty in the extreme. At their doors may be seen the usual mud-pools, which, in winter, overflow and render the approach to them inconvenient and unhealthy, whilst in summer these semi-fluid accumulations of putrid slime, continue to exhale of-

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be found, where I first saw it, in a note of Polwhele's, in that part of his history, where he treats of the diseases of Cornwall, a subject upon which he seems to have entered *con amore* and which he has enriched with a great number of curious and important facts, collected from various, scarce and authentic sources.

fensive and deleterious miasmata from their dark-green surfaces, until, towards the approach of autumn, their infectious tendency becomes fully developed, and we cannot be surprised that fever in some form or other should so frequently ensue. It would indeed have been happy for the rest of the County, if Mr. Pryce's theory could have been maintained, for then we should not have to witness as we now do, the diffusion of typhus in all directions, from a cause alike applicable to every place where want of cleanliness prevails. But, on the other hand, we may derive some consolation from the reflection, that, if such fevers as we have to combat under the name of typhus did really originate in mineral effluvia, their prevention, as to mining districts, might be hopeless; whereas, with our present juster views of the subject, these districts may as easily get rid of the infection as other places. Their inhabitants must endeavour to acquire habits of cleanliness, instead of their present dirty ones; and they will not be deprived of their reward by means of any effluvia from mines in their neighbourhood. I lately saw two sisters and a brother ill of typhus in one small room near Chacewater, and was informed that a brother and a brother's wife had just fallen victims to this complaint. Their house with some others adjoining, was open

to the west, with a low hedge in front, enclosing a dirty courtlet, in which, previously to their illness, all manner of filth from their pigs and themselves had been allowed to accumulate.<sup>e</sup> Similar instances, out of number,

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<sup>e</sup> The two sisters above mentioned, their father and another brother, died subsequently, making in all six out of ten individuals who were attacked with typhus in the same family; and two at least, of the four who survive, owe their tardy recovery principally to the humane, judicious, and persevering attentions of MR. STANLEY, of *Chacewater*, whose appeal to the public in their behalf lately appeared in the Truro Newspapers.

For many weeks he visited them twice or thrice daily, superintending their medical treatment, providing such articles of nutriment as were required, and by his directions paying all the attention that was possible to the cleanliness of their bedding and apartments.

With some of the money that has been collected, the court in front of the cottages has been put in better order; the catch-pits before the doors have been filled up, and a freer admission of sun and air obtained by the removal of the pig-styes.

I must not omit to add that such has been the dread of contagion, that no regular nurse could be procured; so that the whole labour, indescribably great as it was, of nursing, washing, and preparing sustenance for the sick, devolved for many weeks on two females, the eldest of whom was only twenty three, and the other, a daughter of the unfortunate TREWEEK, only sixteen years of age. The former, whose person corresponds with the amiable

might be adduced in proof of the connection between dirt and disease, but as I hope the subjoined note<sup>f</sup> will be quite conclusive upon

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mental qualities she has displayed, and whose name ELIZA GILL deserves to be recorded for her unexampled fortitude and humanity, left her situation as a servant in *Truro* to attend upon one of the sons, who was her lover, and who unhappily was one of the earliest victims of the fever. Seeing the helpless state and misery of the remaining family, she determined to devote herself, through fatigue and privations of every kind, and at the imminent peril of her life, to their pressing necessities; and I am happy to say, that neither herself nor her help-mate<sup>g</sup> has hitherto materially suffered from exertions, which far exceed all praise.

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<sup>f</sup> Pestilential diseases, those “monstra horrenda” which formerly knew no bounds to their occasional ravages, have it is true nearly disappeared from this part of the globe, but there still remains a formidable array of ills, which shew their indubitable descent from the same family of death by their close affinity to the same sources of production. It behoves us, therefore, to lay the axe nearer the root.

If we take *London* for an example, it will be found that the health of its inhabitants has improved exactly in proportion with the increased attention of its police to measures of ventilation and cleanliness. Since the great fire in 1666, it has remained exempt from the plague, in consequence of the improvements which took place in the re-construction of the city. But severe intermitting and remitting fevers and dysentery continued to recur for a long time afterwards. “It was not, (says

this point, I will not interrupt the thread of my observations by further specific details,

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a late eminent writer on the diseases of *London*, DR. BATEMAN,) until the year 1762, that the light of a rational knowledge upon the subject of the public health, which had dawned from the time of the rebuilding of the city of *London*, shone forth among the inhabitants of *Westminster*, who then set the example of reform, with the sanction of Parliament, and were followed by those of the city, in the adoption of similar measures in 1766. Fleet ditch was then covered in ; the streets were paved with large squared stones ; the ranges of ports, which took up the space of a line of passengers on each side, were removed ; the signs, gates and bars, were taken down, and a free ventilation admitted : the sewers and drains were improved ; openings were made in the incommodeous parts of the streets ; and cleanliness still further promoted by the more active employment of scavengers, an increased supply of water, &c.; which system still continues to be pursued to the great ornament, as well as the substantial benefit of the town.”

“In fact, the diseases by which *London*, in common with all large cities, was formerly infected, and is so still to a certain degree, are the regular endemics of camps, especially in the autumnal season, if they remain even for a short time stationary, or are situated on damp or swampy ground. They are obviously occasioned by the miasmata arising from a damp soil, and by the effluvia engendered by the accumulating filth of an army, such as the putrid remains of victuals, the water used in cookery and washing, (which is necessarily impregnated with animal and vegetable matter) and all excre-

derived from our own neighbourhood. I am happy on the other hand to have it in my

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mentitious substanees. By the removal of a camp from a damp to a dry situation, and by forming proper receptaeles under ground for filth of every kind and for remnants of vietuals, endemie diseases have been altogether avoided. Now, as a large town is liable to all the nuisances of an extensive camp, without an equal capability of changing its situation, the same or greater preeaution as to cleanliness will be absolutely neeessary, and the preservation of health will depend on the eare taken to provide proper drains and common sewers, a hard and regular pavement, and as abundant a supply of running water as possible."

Another very eminent modern writer on fever, DR. ARMSTRONG, after addueing a great many faets to shew the obious connexion of typhus fever, under all its different forms, and in all its different places of residence, with the exhalations arising from choked drains and open common sewers, mentions a eircumstance whieh oeeurred to a physician, a friend of his, in the island of *Demarara*. "Typhus fever attacked a great number of soldiers in the barraeks, and walking one day round them with an officer, he observed that the poles were blackened at a particular spot, which led to the diseovery of an old drain, which had been filled up with vegetable matter, then in a state of putrefaetion. It was cleared out, and typhus disappeared from the barraeks."

"He mentions likewise an Ameriean traveller, who, when on his travals about the lakes of Ameriea, found that typhus did not prevail round the margin of lakes,

power to bring forward an instance, as illustrative as a single one can be, of the good

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which were fed by natural springs, and which were bright upon the surface; but, on the contrary, that it did prevail round the margin of those artificial lakes, which, not being thus fed, were not only dull upon the surface, but covered occasionally by a dirty film, which, on experiment, he found to be the putrefactive product of animalculæ which are existent in vegetable matter."

But there is, there can be no doubt, that malaria, whether arising from desiccating swamps, from stagnant lakes, or from collections of putrid filth in the immediate neighbourhood of human habitations, is the primary and principal source of typhus fever. And let it not be said, that I compare irrelevantly small things with great, for I fear it would be found, that, if all the open catch-pits in some parishes in Cornwall, were thrown together, they would form a lake, or rather a noisome pond—a sort of *mare lethiferum*, of no inconsiderable extent.

*London*, we have seen, has become more healthy generally, and less obnoxious to typhus fever in particular, in consequence of the progressive improvement in the ventilation, draining, and general cleanliness of the city. But typhus fever is still by no means of unfrequent occurrence there, and we have the best authority for believing, that this metropolis of the world, this city inhabited by upwards of a million souls, still admits of considerable improvement in reference to the prevention of malaria and consequently of typhus fever. And whether or not the desirable object of its entire extermination in so populous a city will ever be effected, as DR. ARMSTRONG confi-

effects of cleanliness, which has come to my knowledge within a few days only, and which forms a most gratifying exception to some of my preceding remarks. At the house of a young man ill of typhus, in the parish of *St. Enoder*, I fell into conversation with MR. PUNNETT, the curate of the parish, who informed me that he had lately heard MR. JEWEL of *St. Columb* express his surprise that, for the last twelve months, in the course of which he had met with typhus fever in all the neighbouring parishes, he did not know that a single case had occurred in *Roach*, where it used to be particularly prevalent. I immediately asked him whether any steps had been taken to which this exemption could be attributed? He said there had; and he proceeded to state, what MR. JEWEL afterwards confirmed, that, not only had the mud-pools been made to disappear from the fronts of the cottages, but that an entire revolution as to cleanliness

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dently asserts it may be, yet there can be no doubt that, as we descend in the scale of population to smaller towns and villages, and detached cottages, the difficulty is proportionably less. And when once the extent and magnitude of the evil, even with respect to these, shall get to be fairly weighed against the comparatively easy measures required for its extinction, we may expect to see the apathy, that has so long existed, succeeded by vigorous and completely successful exertions.

had been effected in the domestic œconomy of the parish, by MR. FISHER, the vicar. It is therefore not at all surprising that, cleanliness having, under his good advice and superintendance, succeeded to filth, health should, as a natural consequence, have succeeded to disease. And what greater triumph, could have been achieved! The power of conferring health on his fellow creatures, is the highest privilege conceded to man; it has been said to be that whereby he approaches nearest to his Maker. And that this contribution to the temporal comforts of his parishioners will essentially promote the still nobler object of MR. FISHER's exertions, their eternal welfare, no one, who has a proper feeling of religion, and a due sense of its connexion with well regulated habits, can doubt for a moment. Let us hope that his example will be followed generally throughout the county! The same zeal and attention elsewhere, of the upper and enlightened classes, cannot fail to produce similar results. But zeal and attention, well directed exertions and examples of cleanly tenements, purposely erected, are indispensable. At present the poor, or the greater part of them, have even less the inclination than the means, to set about making the trifling alterations required. Their catch-pits in particular, are great fa-

vourites with them, and it is by no means an easy matter, as I have often found, to get them to consent to their removal. They cannot believe that they have any thing to do, in the relation of cause and effect, with the squalid appearance of themselves and their children; for they have been accustomed to contemplate them only as affording manure for their gardens, and future potato crops, and are not aware that with a little good management, its quantity might be doubled, and their health preserved. There is, moreover, a moral effort connected with all alterations that seem to be attended with any trouble; and when we consider how frequently the poor cottager and his wife are weighed down by the cares of an increasing family, and the labour of providing for them, we cannot wonder at their disinclination to the smallest mental or bodily exertion, that is not absolutely unavoidable, or allied to their immediate and pressing wants.

Where gentlemen have to build cottages for their labourers, any neglect of attention to a point of so much importance as health is inexcusable, and is sure moreover to bring with it its own punishment; for sickness invariably leads to dependance on others for food and raiment; and private charity or the funds of

the parish, must supply most unsatisfactorily deficiencies which, with the blessing of health, would not have occurred. It must be allowed that various circumstances will occasion cottages to be often built where the situations may be far from eligible, but, when there is a choice, the site of the cottage should be such as to afford some degree of shelter from wind and rain, without too much exclusion of sun and air. The foundation above all should be dry, with ready access to good water; and with regard to its aspect, need I say that this too should be an object of particular care, surely not of less care than that exerted in the inferior fabric which SOMERVILLE in "his Chace" so beautifully orders to be

"Upon some little eminence erect,  
And fronting to the ruddy dawn; it's courts  
On either hand wide opening to receive  
The sun's all-cheering beams, when mild he shines,  
And gilds the mountain tops."

Accordingly let every cottage, if possible, front the east or south-east, whereby the inhabitants not only enjoy the cheering and invigorating influence of the morning sun, but likewise avoid, what is even of more consequence, the inconvenience of returning home, after a hard day's work in summer, to rooms heated to a suffocating degree by its evening rays.

The front entrance to the cottage should be through a garden; and in the back part of the house there need be no window farther than may be required to give light to a pantry or wash-kitchen, appendages very conducive to cleanliness and comfort, and easily procured, where the cottage consists of more than one story,<sup>g</sup> by lowering the roof in the usual way. From the back-kitchen there must be a door opening into a courtlet and in a corner or other fit part of this courtlet, there should be a pit so contrived as to become the convenient receptacle of drains and filth of every sort. As little as possible of the surface of this pit should be exposed to the air, and it's contents should be removed at sufficiently short intervals to prevent the chance of their becoming offensive by too long accumulation.<sup>h</sup> The pig's house should be

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<sup>g</sup> When cottages are built in exposed situations, it is desirable that they should consist of one story only, and that every such cottage or group of cottages should occupy two sides of a square, fronting the south and east. They should, if possible, consist of three rooms, the middle one being for the family by day, with a bedroom on either side, so as to afford some chance of protection against a promiscuous assemblage of the sexes at night in one lodging room.

<sup>h</sup> In towns, the lower orders should be discouraged to the utmost from keeping pigs. No one can ade-

so constructed as to admit of being easily kept clean, and this, together with a shed for fuel and lumber, will be all the additional buildings that the cottager's courtlet need contain. Cottagers generally speaking, whatever may be the occasional difficulties of the present times, are capable of becoming far more independent members of society now than formerly; and notwithstanding the deteriorating tendency of those necessary evils the “the poor laws,” and those for the most part unnecessary ones “the public houses,” there is reason to hope that our peasantry may yet become more than they have ever been “their country's pride.” A century or

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quately describe the nuisance and contamination they occasion in close courts, and the backlets of narrow and thickly-inhabited streets; neither do they, in fact, possess any advantage on the score of œconomy, to counterbalance their offensive tendency. The refuse provision of a poor man's family affords nothing like a maintenance for a single pig, and the small sums expended weekly in buying brewer's grains, kitchen-wash, potatoes, and finally barley, raise the price considerably beyond the value of the food in the market. The defence usually set up is, that the small sums spent in providing for a pig would otherwise be wasted; but this implies a degree of improvidence that would disappear before better habits of order and cleanliness; not to mention that savings banks, now become general, receive deposits of a single shilling, and thus meet the only plausible argument completely.

two ago the common articles of life were comparatively few and ill supplied; no precaution on the part of the peasant could enable him to provide against the casualties of an inclement season, but when corn became scarce, want and disease, more or less according to the degree of scarcity, were sure to follow; whereas now the potato comes in aid of corn to an incalculable degree. Either the husbandman has, almost every where, a small spot of ground allotted to him for a potato-garden, or he cultivates jointly with others, some field which the neighbouring farmer thus gets prepared for his wheat-seed in autumn.<sup>1</sup> With the aid of his potatoes he

<sup>1</sup>The “Cottage System” has been introduced in the neighbourhood of *Wells*, with the happiest results. In consequence of a representation made to the Bishop of the diocese, his Lordship granted one of his best fields, fourteen acres, for a trial of the system. The field was divided into lots of a quarter of an acre each, at the low rate of 10s.  $\text{£}$  annum; and so pleased was the Bishop with the result, that he has latterly granted three more fields, of ten acres each, for a similar purpose: he has also caused a good road to be made to the cottages, and has adopted every other means of convenience the tenants could require. In addition, his Lordship lends them his own carts and horses, for the purpose of hauling out their manure, and taking home their produce; and has promised the land to the poor labouring occupants for their use so long as he holds the See. The benefits of the system are

is enabled to support a pig or two in the course of each year, and, now that the salt tax has been removed, he can thus lay in a good store of wholesome food towards the maintenance of his family. In Cornwall pork fish and potatoes are, more than bread, the staff of the poor-man's life; and the variety of substantial fare which these afford, where a clever house-wife presides over their preparation, is very considerable. Cabbages, turnips and occasionally beans and peas, form additional articles of cheap and wholesome nutriment; in fact the cultivation of turnips, like that of potatoes ought to be reckoned among the improvements of modern times, and may be fairly set off against adverse changes if any such there be. So that modern labourers, with the average wages of from one shilling and sixpence, to two shillings  $\frac{1}{2}$  day will be found, upon the whole, to have greatly the advantage of their an-

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now extended to one hundred and twelve families; who, when not employed by their more wealthy neighbours, have thus always an opportunity of turning their time to a profitable account. Not one of the occupants receives parish pay—they are not allowed to occupy any land while they continue paupers: and many have exchanged the parish pittance, for the more honorable dependence, their own industry. (*Bath Paper.*)

cestors in the same rank of life. They may not be regaled with beef and mutton from the Baron's hall or a neighbouring convent; but I cannot suppose that, at any period, beef and mutton fell regularly to the lot of the labouring classes, or at least, if it did, that it must have been in a very uninviting and innutritious state. Now-a-days, our markets are equally well supplied with butcher's meat throughout the year, but this has only been the case since the art of growing green crops so abundantly has been known and practised by the farmer; and if we turn to countries less favoured than England by improvements in agriculture, or that have been retarded in their progress to a better condition by climate or other causes, we shall meet with no uniform perennial supply of animal food, and the poor will be found to labour under difficulties bearing no comparison with the lesser grievances of the peasantry of this island. They are generally speaking worse fed and far worse defended, every way, against the vicissitudes of weather and the seasons.

Upon the whole I am well persuaded that there is more to be done for the labouring classes, by paying increased attention to the situation, construction and cleanliness of their

cottages, with their courtlets and gardens, than by any measure or system of measures whatever. As we know a man by the company he keeps, so do we know the real character of a cottager, his worth or want of worth, by the state in which we find his cottage-establishment. If we find his cottage neat and conveniently furnished, his wife and children clean and warmly clad, it matters little how homely, his garden free from weeds and full of useful articles, his pig-sty and other sources of dirt so arranged and attended to as to prevent their being nuisances to himself or others, then, depend upon it, there will be no complaint with such a man of the times; there will be a loaf of bread on the shelf, a flitch of bacon on the rack and potatoes in store; and turnips, cabbages and other vegetables will succeed each other in their due season, and, in all probability there will be some money too in the neighbouring savings bank.<sup>k</sup> The children of a cottager whose

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<sup>k</sup> Unfortunately in the mining parts of Cornwall bees seldom do well from the want of good water, or rather from the presence of water destructive of them, but bees should always be kept where the situation of the cottage is favourable for them. They occasion little trouble and no dirt; and, in addition to any profit that may accrue from them, a good deal of innocent pleasure, derived

habits are such as I have just delineated will be taught to read as a thing of course and perhaps to write; for in this too favoured country, it would be difficult to name the spot, where a sunday school at least has not been established, to which the children of the poor have access free of expence, with rewards occasionally of books and clothing. In fact where parents, however humble, are well disposed and set good examples, their children will not fail of reaping the benefit of them, and as they grow up they will succeed to good and suitable situations in life. The parish overseer will not be required to meddle with them; but they will be the chosen apprentices and servants of their neighbourhood, and, in return, their parents will not be forsaken in their old age by children who had been taught by them to earn their bread with cheerfulness, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

Such a picture of happiness in humble life may seem to be at variance with the actual state of the poor, and, generally speaking, it unquestionably is so; but surely there is

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from the contemplation of their wonderful œconomy, will often be blended with the useful practical lesson they teach of the productiveness of persevering industry.

nothing so overcharged in it, as to make it visionary, or to justify a belief that it might not much more frequently be realized, than it has been hitherto. Publick attention has not yet been sufficiently drawn to this important subject; we are not yet sufficiently influenced in our conduct towards the poor by the paramount consideration, that poverty and disease are invariably engendered and perpetuated by bad and slovenly habits, whilst habits of a contrary nature lead as certainly to competency, health and contentment. It is true that, here and there, the peaceful cottager may be seen in Cornwall as well as in other parts of England, in the enjoyment of every comfort and advantage that the benevolence and wealth of some neighbouring gentleman have been able to confer upon him; but why are not more of our country gentlemen and clergymen busy at the same good work? We have seen how much has been effected by the clergyman of one parish in this County, and that by no means an inviting one for such attempts; and what is there to prevent the same success attending similar exertions elsewhere? In towns a great deal may be done by means of an intelligent and active police, but in them impediments will often arise from admixture of property, and the difficulty of

getting the concurrent assistance of a number of individuals, variously interested, and neither equally enlightened, nor equally capable, from their pecuniary circumstances, of speculating on future advantage to themselves or others, at the risk of immediate privation.<sup>1</sup> But in the country it much oftener happens that a single well-informed individual is capable of exercising a very extensive and beneficial influence. Wherever the small sums required for the purpose can be raised, there should be some distinctive reward for cottagers, who by good conduct shew that they are attentive to good advice. Above all, no industrious cottager should be allowed to remain unprovided with such a spot of ground as he is capable of successfully cultivating at leisure hours; and from an one-eighth to a quarter of an acre, will generally be better than more; for, without the aid of a lucky start in mining,

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<sup>1</sup> It is provoking to see two or three extensive rows of small tenements now building at *Truro*, which, from want of proper plans will be far less healthy, and by no means so valuable in a pecuniary point of view as they might have been at the same expence of construction. They have, most of them, gardens in front, but their courtlets behind are so miserably narrow and ill-contrived, that it is hardly possible for them to be kept in a cleanly state.

or some other piece of good fortune, productive of means beyond the proceeds of daily labour, no poor man should attempt to cope with several acres, especially of a coarse description. After years of hard struggling, a severe winter sooner or later will arrive and find him ill provided for the maintenance even of his little stock, and a petition such as may be seen perpetually in circulation, will soon inform the humane and charitable, that the loss of a horse or of a cow has brought him to great distress. Besides, when there is too much to be done at home, the labourer will seldom be worthy of his hire elsewhere, so that, whether we have regard to the interests of the labourer himself, or of his employer, or of the parish, with reference to the poor-rate, in which he lives, it will equally, I believe, be found that he cannot be placed better for the maintenance of his family, than where the produce of a well cultivated garden goes to help out the earnings of regular daily labour.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>m</sup> It is much to be wished that cottagers could be better supplied than they are with milk. Goats are not so plenty as they might be. And I know few things that would redound more to the credit of country gentlemen than the establishment of dairies in proportion to the population

When I thought of committing the preceding observations to paper, my chief and almost my only object was to point out a preventive of typhus fever in the advantage resulting from greater attention to cleanliness in the habits and dwellings of the poor. And as I have trespassed somewhat beyond the limits of my original purpose, so I cannot come to a better conclusion than by remarking that cleanliness is not only, what I have endeavoured to make it appear, the best preservative against disease, and the surest pledge of prosperity, but that, with reference to the lower orders of society especially, it may well be said to be that virtue, which is next

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of their neighbourhood, purposely for the supply of the poor with milk. Such a price would most readily be paid for it as would meet in all probability the expence incurred, if it were not fully to prove a remunerating one, which, where the object is so purely a humane one, would not be sought for. The quantity of milk that is eked out to the poor either gratuitously or at a low charge, when the supply of a gentleman's family is first to be considered, or where not only the farmer's own family, but his calves and pigs must first be fed, is so sparing as hardly to be reckoned among the privileges of the poor, by far the greater part of whom do not taste milk, because they cannot procure it, from one end of the year to the other.

to godliness. Cleanly habits are ever associated, in humble life, with industrious ones, and, where six days of the week have been well and industriously employed, an attentive discharge of the duties of the seventh will be sure to follow; duties which not only serve to enhance the value of this appointed interval of repose from the drudgery of life, but which impart likewise to the mind that peace and consolation, which the votaries of pleasure on that holy day can never know. What would they not give at the close of life for emotions such as the pious cottager surrounded by his family, has so often felt at the eve of Sunday, when, the labours of the week being over,

And “kneeling down, to heaven’s eternal king  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays;  
 Hope springs exulting in triumphant wing,  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days;  
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator’s praise,  
 In such society, yet still more dear;  
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.”

*(Burns’ Cotter’s Saturday Night.)*

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In the last number (for January, 1827,) of the Gardener's Magazine, which I have just seen, there is a very interesting and appropriate paper from a gentleman named MOGGRIDGE, in Monmouthshire, giving an account of the success of an experiment, in which he seems to have engaged with great spirit, and in the face of difficulties which his friends thought insurmountable. The paper is not written throughout in equally good feeling ; and the scheme, in some of its details, savours a little too much of the system of OWEN, but it shews very convincingly, that the common labourer, when there is employment for him, requires only to be put in the way of becoming more respectable, and he will not afterwards be wanting to himself. I shall confine the following extracts to the illustration of this fact.

"Twenty years' experience," Mr. MOGGRIDGE says, "as a Magistrate of this (Monmouthshire,) and two adjoining counties, have fully confirmed in my mind a suspicion I had from general observations previously formed, that the moral and political degradation of the labouring classes of this country generally, is more the effect of the circumstances in which they have been placed, than of any positive and unavoidable necessity ; and by far less the result of their

own indifference or criminality, than of the imperfection and errors of that state of society of which they form an essential portion. Not satisfied with endeavouring to demonstrate this great and important truth by means of the public press, I determined on making it a matter of actual experiment, and having at the time a colliery in work upon my estate, I selected a piece of land not very fully or profitably stocked as woodland, at a moderate distance therefrom, and within a mile of one or two other collieries, which I knew my lands to be capable of admitting the formation of, at some future period of time. Here, having previously cleared away the underwood and bushes on about one hundred perches of land, I invited several working colliers and others whom I knew to be industrious and tolerably sober, to built houses fit for the reception of themselves and families, offering them the land and raw materials for building, (to be had on the property,) with other temporary aid, on terms that, whilst they left them little to risk, provided a prospect of fair remuneration in time to myself, should the plan succeed. The greatest difficulty I found, in the first instance, to arise out of that state, bordering on despair, which paralyses the exertions of a great majority of our labouring poor; this overcome, every

thing else became comparatively easy, especially when I had once established the conviction in their minds, that nothing done for them would be considered as charity. I was determined to put them upon their own resources, and that what was found wanting should be supplied, but repaid by degrees, and in a manner to be as little burdensome as possible. The plan took, after a short pause, and I have now the pleasure of seeing a village of well-built, comfortable and commodious houses, picturesquely rising in grouped and single dwellings, between groves and smaller masses of trees, containing eight or nine hundred inhabitants, where seven years ago were nothing but thickets, brakes and wood." "I have within the last two months laid the foundation of another village, at the distance of about two miles from the former. I took care that the situation abounded in springs of water: but the last summer has been so trying a one, that the inhabitants have thankfully acceeded to my proposition of bringing different springs together, and uniting them into two streams, and fountains for their issue in different parts of the village, they defraying one half of the necessary cost."

"In advertizing more particularly to what may be termed the œconomical, moral and political

effects of my experiment, I have first to remark, that families, formerly accustomed to live together, by night as well as day, without regard to age or sex, decency or health, are now completely separated, at least as regards adults; and many houses have a room to spare for lodgers. Every cottager has his own oven, and bakes his own bread; and, what is most worth of all, he has his garden. The original allotment to each house was twenty perches of land, and the same amount still accompanies every fresh grant. The taste of the country savoured not of a garden; the old cottager was content with a few square yards, sufficient to contain a few leeks and perhaps onions; and I found more difficulty in inducing them to bring their gardens into useful cultivation, than on any other point, after the plan was first started; but great praise for little work, where *any* was performed; the reward of one hundred cabbage plants, or a couple of gooseberry trees, but, above all of an apple tree or two, out of my own nursery, performed wonders; and, as soon as I safely could, I conferred a right of claim, for certain progress made within limited times; in order to meet the demands of which, I now direct additional quantities of the seeds of useful vegetables to be sown, and fresh plantations of gooseberry and cur-

rant trees, &c. &c., to be made. With one only exception (arising perhaps from peculiar circumstances) all the villager's gardens are now well cultivated, some of them highly; producing peas, beans, potatoes, cabbages, cauliflowers, in the vegetable; and, more sparingly, currants, gooseberries, raspberries, some strawberries, and apples, in the fruit line. Many a man that used to waste his spare time and money in public-houses, is now to be seen at work in his garden, after the day's labour is over. Several of the women, too, are conspicuously industrious in this way; so that I mean to fix a day annually for bestowing prizes and rewards publicly, which, as a general and regular inspection must then take place, will, I am sure, prove a powerful stimulus.

After recommending the communication from whence the above extracts are taken, to his readers, the editor of the Gardener's Magazine proceeds to observe,

“ Were it once to become the fashion for country gentlemen to be as much occupied in improving the condition of the labouring classes on their estates, as they formerly were in improving the breed of cattle all over the country, how great and beneficial would be

the change! And why should not this kind of improvement come into fashion as well as any other? Is it more expensive, troublesome, or tedious, or less profitable, rational, elevated, or entertaining? Were such a taste to become general, the first thing would be an exterior appearance of comfort in the cottages and cottage-gardens, on every gentleman's estate, and - the next, the establishment of Madras schools in every hamlet and village.<sup>n</sup> The agricultural labourers, in many parts of the country, are in such a wretched state of ignorance and degredation, that, to look at their cottages, habiliments and weekly wages, one would think them incapable of any degree of refinement; but the experiment made by our correspondent shews the contrary, and that in a short time, not only the habits of necessity, but even tastes of a degraded people may be changed."

It is obvious that the above experiment was better suited to the neighbourhood of collieries than to that of Cornish mines, inasmuch as the former are upon the whole more permanent then the latter. The mining parishes

<sup>n</sup>. There certainly has been for some time past an increase of zeal in favour of the establishment of schools, for the instruction of the children of the poor.

of Cornwall are not only liable to great fluctuations from the varying price of their mineral produce, but still more so from the circumstance that the mines themselves are for ever springing up, too often like ignes fatui, in one place, and going down in another. It will always therefore be extremely difficult to regulate the population so as to provide labourers without their becoming eventually burdensome to the parishes in which the mines are situated. As this in fact is not to be expected, the important truth ought never to be lost sight of, that habits of industry, and of self-respect carry with them such a degree of circumspection and foresight as will go far to meet the difficulties of any adverse change of circumstances,<sup>o</sup> and that it is therefore of the utmost importance to foster such habits, and to give the exertions of the miner at his

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◦ The total absence of these habits in our great manufacturing cities, occasions the stroke of adversity to fall doubly hard upon them. Instead of providing against a rainy day, the workmen, when times are good, often work only four days in the week and spend the other three in idleness and vice; thereby likewise obliging the manufacturer to employ more hands, in times of prosperity, than he would otherwise require, and consequently throwing more men on the parish when evil days come, as come they will much the sooner from the want of virtuous foresight on the part of the manufacturing labourer.

leisure hours the most beneficial direction we can. When he is not working under ground, how is he then to be employed? Is he to be exclusively engaged in the cultivation of such a garden as will consume all his manure, and occupy his time profitably, or may he engage in the arduous endeavour to bring a few barren acres into cultivation? There may be something very captivating with cursory observers, in the praiseworthy efforts of a poor miner, who contrives to erect a cottage for himself on a dreary common, and to enclose acre after acre, full of quartz stones which must be removed with infinite pains before cultivation can begin; yet, judging from the usual results, I am persuaded that such attempts had better not be encouraged, and that, with respect to cottagers generally and miners in particular, they should confine themselves as much as possible to their gardens, and lay up whatever little savings they can make in some neighbouring savings bank.<sup>p</sup> With

<sup>p</sup>The good savings banks are calculated to do is infinite. They are the basis on which the hopes of the cottage system may be said to rest. And, although there was some danger at first of their failure from their having been applied to purposes for which they were not intended by their patriotic founder, MR. ROSE, yet their prosperity has been better secured by some modifications and re-

this view, where no landed proprietor, interested in the welfare of the mining population of his neighbourhood, is at hand to supply such a portion of land, at a moderate rent, as will be competent for gardening purposes, it should become a parochial concern, and the same effects may be reasonably anticipated which we have seen to follow the benevolent experiment of the Bishop of *Bath* and *Wells*; and, under appropriate circumstances, that of MR. MOGGRIDGE.

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Having already adverted to the disappearance of typhus in the parish of *Roach*, in consequence, (as I inferred from information given me by MR. PUNNETT, and MR. GEORGE JEWEL,) of the removal of its prolific sources, the stagnant mud-pools, I am induced, in conclusion of these observations, to return to the principal object of them, by stating that MR. JEWEL of *Tregoney* very lately informed me, that, for many years past, there had been no typhus fever in that town, which he attributes, as he well may, to the successful exertion of his influence in effecting the removal of the

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strictions, which they have since undergone, and which seem now to confine their protection, almost of necessity, to the savings of the lower classes.

catch-pits from the doors of the cottagers. And this has likewise led to a better mode of husbanding their manure in their courtlets; for the growers of potatoes, who are known to abound there, have found it for their interest no longer to expose it in a liquid state; so that, by combining it with litter and earth, and thus keeping it compact, they prevent the diffusion of the noxious effluvia.

In the neighbouring parish of *Ladock*, MR. JEWEL has had, on the contrary, the misfortune of witnessing for many years past, the almost perpetual presence of typhus in the village of *Bisick*, where his urgent and repeated remonstrances against the catch-pits have hitherto been unavailing.<sup>a</sup> It is the dir-

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<sup>a</sup> One of the largest catch-pits in the village is rendered more abominable by it's being the receptacle of all the offal from a butcher's killing-house; and I am sorry to have to bear testimony against butchers generally for the very careless manner in which they expose their offal to putrefaction. Whereas if they were to collect it in a pit somewhat excluded from the air, and frequently blend it with a sufficient quantity of dry litter to absorb the moisture, they would not only remove a frequent cause of just complaint from their neighbourhood, but be great gainers, both in point of health, and in the increased quantity of valuable manure that would thus accumulate.

tiest place I know, and the perpetuated liability of it's inhabitants to infectious fever, is sufficient to establish the truth of all that I have been saying. It is morally certain that, with the adoption of measures of cleanliness in the above-mentioned village, typhus fever would instantly disappear.

THE END.







